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ABSTRACT

A survey was undertaken to examine the roles of supervisor/diagnosticians in the Fort Worth Independent School District Special Education program. Special education classroom teachers were surveyed about time spent in the classrooms by supervisor/diagnosticians, objectives and effects of these visits, and teachers' perceptions of these visits. Analysis of survey responses revealed variation between the teachers' and supervisor/diagnosticians' estimates of number of visits made, length of visits, and number of visits requested by teachers. The estimates of supervisor/diagnosticians were lower on the average than teachers' estimates except for length of visit estimates. Only 16-36% of the visits were followed by sit-down conferences. Objectives of the two groups for the visits were similar, except that teachers indicated a much lower priority for the evaluation function of the supervisor/diagnostician. Teachers were largely positive regarding the effects of the visits. Recommendations were made for an adequate system of recording visits and a clear, detailed definition of the role of the supervisor/diagnostician. (CL)

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CLASS VISITS OF SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIANS

SPECIAL EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS
Fall, 1982

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH
AND EVALUATION



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CLASS VISITS OF SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIANS

SPECIAL EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS
FALL, 1982

Department of Research and Evaluation
Sandra Tees
Evaluator, Special Education

February, 1983

EC171101

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Executive Summary

Question

Supervisor/Diagnosticians have a dual role in the Ft. Worth Independent School District Special Education program. They serve both as educational diagnosticians (working with individual students) and as supervisors of Special Education teachers. The question arose as to the extent of the administrative/supervisory function of that position. Specifically, the Director of Special Education wanted to know

- 1) how Supervisor/Diagnosticians use their time in classroom visits, and
- 2) the effect of those visits.

Findings

Both teachers and Supervisor/Diagnosticians were surveyed. Teachers perceive the Supervisor/Diagnostician as a person who gives advice, helps with paperwork and tests students. Supervisor/Diagnosticians see supervision and evaluation as a large part of their classroom activity. The study as a whole points to the need to decide what the role should be and then objectively define all aspects of that role. The definition should then be implemented in such a way that both Supervisor/Diagnostician and school personnel have similar expectations for that role.

CLASS VISITS OF SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIANS

SPECIAL EDUCATION SURVEY RESULTS FALL, 1982

QUESTIONS

In the Fall of 1982, Mrs. Kay Jones, Director of Special Education, requested a survey of Supervisor/Diagnosticians and Special Education classroom teachers in order to answer four major questions:

- How much time do Supervisor/Diagnosticians spend in visits to classrooms?
- What are the objectives of these visits?
- How do teachers perceive these visits?
- What are the effects of these visits?

These questions arose from a need to more clearly define the actual administrative/supervisory duties of the Supervisor/Diagnostician. In answering these questions, it was clear that two secondary questions would also be considered:

- Are teachers' perceptions of the objectives of supervisory visits the same as those of Supervisor/Diagnosticians?
- Are teachers receiving what they expect to receive from these visits?

OPTIONS

A survey appeared to be the most efficient means of obtaining information in view of the time and personnel available to undertake the study.

PROCEDURES

Teachers and Supervisor/Diagnosticians were surveyed with respect to activities of the previous year. Most relied on memory of classroom visits, some had calendar records, and a few indicated that written notes of the visit had been kept. Appendix A contains copies of the survey instruments used.

ANSWERS

Data Supervisor/Diagnostician responses have been analyzed and presented in detail in an earlier interim report to the Director of Special Education. This report is included in Appendix B.

Teacher and Supervisor/Diagnostician responses are compared in Attachments 1 and 2. Attachment 1 shows descriptive data (averages) with respect to visits; Attachment 2 is a listing of objectives of these visits.

It should be noted that the objectives as written by Supervisor/Diagnosticians and teachers were categorized for reporting purposes. Eight major categories evolved as a result. Responses within each category were tabulated; these tabulations were used to compare and rank order categories.

How much time do Supervisor/Diagnosticians spend in the classroom?

Attachment 1 shows variation between teacher and Supervisor/Diagnostician estimates of numbers of visits made, length of visits, number requested by teachers, those scheduled ahead of time and those followed by conference. Average Supervisor/Diagnostician estimates are lower than that of teachers with the exception of length of visit estimates.

Much of the variation may be the result of wide variations in estimates between Supervisor/Diagnosticians: this is a severe difficulty in estimates of number of visits and time spent in visits. (See Appendix B, Table 1.) Supervisor/Diagnosticians indicate an average of 7.47 visits with an average of 30.6 minutes per visit. Teachers indicate an average of 13.3 visits with an average of 15.4 minutes per visit. This discrepancy suggests that:

- a) better records should be kept, and
- b) better survey methods should be used (strict definition of "visit" and survey initiated during or at the end of the school year in question).

Only 16 to 36% (depending on whose perception is used) of these visits were followed by sit-down conferences. It is possible that some communications regarding results of visits were done via written notes. Roughly the same percentages (17-35%) were "scheduled" visits. Teachers requested 8 to 19% of the visits. Principal conferences followed 9 to 11%.

What are the objectives of these visits?

How do teachers perceive these visits?

Supervisor/Diagnosticians' and teachers' objectives for visits were quite similar with two major exceptions. Teachers indicated a much lower priority for the evaluation function of the Supervisor/Diagnostician. This objective rated a poor fifth place according to teacher response, but was given a strong second place rating by Supervisor/Diagnosticians.

In addition, teacher responses indicated a fourth place rating for the ARD preparation function as they perceived the Supervisor/Diagnosticians objectives for a visit. For their own needs, teacher responses showed the "prepared for ARD" objective with a third place rating. Supervisor/Diagnosticians rated this function as a sixth out of eight in both importance and frequency.

What are the effects of these visits?

Teachers receive suggestions which help them work more effectively with one or more of their students. As a group, they cited this as the most frequent result of a Supervisor/Diagnostician's visit. Next in order of frequency was help with required paperwork. Less frequently, teachers received help with use of curriculum materials. Teachers infrequently made written notes of their

discussions with Supervisor/Diagnosticians.

Teachers' additional comments were in large part positive, with laudatory remarks for their own Supervisor/Diagnosticians. Hostile remarks (and there were a few of these) seemed to stem most frequently from a lack of contact with a Supervisor/Diagnostician, rather as a result of the latter's perceived incompetence. A very few teachers expressed resentment; they indicated that those who evaluated their performance did not visit their classrooms for a sufficient length of time. This does not appear to be an extensive problem, but it does exist.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study, we may draw several conclusions.

- a) The number of class visits made by Supervisor/Diagnosticians in a school year is not routinely recorded by the parties involved (memory is a poor substitute) and, as a result, no definitive figures are available to answer questions regarding time spent.
- b) Both Supervisor/Diagnostician and teacher have as a prime objective of these visits ADVICE to teachers regarding instruction.
- c) Supervisor/Diagnosticians perceive the "observe/evaluate instruction and class management" to be their most frequent objective. Teachers rate this function as a poor fifth in frequency of objectives of a visit. One might infer from this that teachers do not see the evaluation role as a major function of the Supervisor/Diagnostician's job. They do see assistance with paperwork, preparation for ARD meetings, and student evaluations as major functions.
- d) Teachers are receiving what they expect to receive from Supervisor/Diagnosticians. This is advice regarding individual students and assistance with required paperwork. In general, their responses regarding Supervisor/Diagnosticians were very positive.

It is suggested that an adequate system for recording visits would be useful to both teachers and Supervisor/Diagnosticians. A clear, detailed definition of the role of the Supervisor/Diagnostician to all personnel concerned should be useful as well, particularly if these people are to function in true supervisory capacities.

ATTACHMENT 1. AVERAGES PER TEACHER

	SUPERVISOR/ DIAGNOSTICIAN RESPONSE	ALL TEACHER RESPONSE	RESOURCE n = 90	SCI/TRN n = 65	SPECIAL SCHOOLS n = 36
# VISITS BY SUPERVISOR	7.47	13.3	17.5	13.3	3.0
HOW MANY SCHEDULED?	1.32	4.7	7.6	2.8	1.0
# FOLLOWED BY CONFERENCE	1.18	4.8	7.7	2.8	1.0
# FOLLOWED BY PRINCIPAL CONFERENCE?	.83	1.3	2.0	.7	.4
# REQUESTED BY TEACHER	.60	2.5	2.7	3.1	1.1
AVERAGE LENGTH OF VISIT (MIN.)	30.6	15.4	19.9	12.6	9.2

ATTACHMENT 2. PERCEPTIONS OF OBJECTIVES: SUPERVISORY VISITS TO CLASSROOMS

HOW SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIANS SAW IT
 the most frequently cited to least
 frequently cited objectives

- OBSERVE/EVALUATE INSTRUCTION AND CLASS MANAGEMENT
- OBSERVE/EVALUATE SPECIFIC STUDENTS
- ADVISE TEACHER RE INSTRUCTION/ CLASS MANAGEMENT/CURRICULUM
- PROVIDE INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE WITH: FORMS, POLICY, CRITERIA, TEST INTERPRETATION, STUDENT DATA, PLACEMENT

. . . . less frequent objectives

- Support teacher/boost moral/ develop good relationship
- Prepare for ARD
- Develop good relations with regular education/respond to principal, regular teacher requests
- Supervise use of IEP

WHAT TEACHERS THOUGHT THE SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIAN WAS THERE TO DO (most frequent to least). . . .

- PROVIDE INFORMATION
- OBSERVE/EVALUATE SPECIFIC STUDENTS
- ADVISE TEACHER
- PREPARE FOR ARD

. . . . less frequent objectives

- Observe/evaluate instruction/ class management
- Support teacher
- Develop good relations
- Supervise use of IEP

WHAT TEACHERS WANTED SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIANS TO DO

- ADVISE TEACHER
- PROVIDE INFORMATION
- PREPARE FOR ARD
- OBSERVE/EVALUATE SPECIFIC STUDENTS

. . . . less frequent objectives

- Observe/evaluate instruction/ class management
- Support teacher
- Supervise use of IEP
- Develop good relations

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A-1

TEACHER SURVEY: CLASSROOM VISITS BY SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIANS

DATE _____

1981-82 SCHOOL _____

TEACHER _____

TYPE UNIT _____

Please indicate the approximate number of visits made to your classroom by your supervisor/diagnostician during the 1981-82 school year: _____

How many of these visits were scheduled with you ahead of time? _____

How many of the visits, scheduled or unscheduled, were followed by a sit down conference with you? _____ A sit down conference with the principal? _____

How many of these visits were requested by you? _____

Please indicate approximate hours/minutes for:

- a) length of shortest visit _____
- b) length of longest visit _____
- c) average length of visit _____

In order of frequency, what were the objectives of these visits?

Supervisor/diagnostician
objectives

My objectives

1)

1)

2)

2)

3)

3)

What most frequently happened as a result of a visit? Rank the following according to the frequency of its occurrence. Use "1" for the most frequent result.

- ___ a) I made written notes of our discussion.
- ___ b) I received suggestions which helped me work more effectively with one or more of my students.
- ___ c) I received suggestions which helped me to more effectively use curriculum materials.
- ___ d) I received suggestions which helped me deal more effectively with required paperwork.
- ___ e) Other (please use back of this paper to explain)

What could be done to make these visits more valuable to you? _____

Survey of Classroom Visits

Date _____

Supervisor/Diagnostician _____

How many classroom visits did you make during the 1981-82 school year? _____

How many of the above visits were scheduled with the teacher ahead of time? _____

How many of the visits, scheduled or unscheduled, were followed by a sit down conference with the teacher? _____; a sit down conference with the principal? _____

How many of the visits were requested by the teacher? _____

What was the range of time for your classroom visitation? _____ minutes to _____ minutes/hours.

What was the average length of your visits? _____

How did you document your visits? _____

your follow up conferences? _____

In order of frequency what were your objectives for your classroom visitation?

1.

2.

3.

In order of importance what were your objectives for your classroom visitation?

1.

2.

3.

MEMORANDUM
FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

3210 WEST LANCASTER

FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76107

(817) 336-8311

CHARLES L. EVANS, Ed.D.
Director
FAE LYSIAK
Assistant Director

WHIT JOHNSTONE
Coordinator of Testing

DATE: November 29, 1982
TO: Kay Jones
FROM: Sandra Tees
SUBJECT: Interim Report of Results of Supervisor/Diagnostician
Classroom Visit Survey

Attached are tables showing results of your survey of Supervisor/Diagnosticians (S/D) with respect to classroom visits in 1981-82. As soon as teacher responses to a similar survey can be analyzed, I will incorporate the data of the two surveys into a report.

Tables 1 and 1A show a breakdown of responses to the first seven questions. The most salient feature of this first table is the variation between S/D personnel with respect to number of visits. This variation may be real in terms of actual work, or it may be the result of poor record keeping/job perception.

Table 2 shows the variety of means S/D personnel use to record visits. Tables 3 and 4 summarize objectives of visits by frequency and importance. Table 3 is actually a summary of Table 4. This last table is an attempt to give a breakdown of objectives by individual Supervisor/Diagnostician.

/le

Attachments

cc: Charles Evans

Table 1. SURVEY OF CLASSROOM VISITS: Responses to First Seven Questions (See Table 1A for questions.)

SUPERVISOR/ DIAGNOSTICIAN	1. # VISITS	2. SCHED. AHEAD	3. TEACHER CONFERENCE	4. PRIN. CONFERENCE	5. TEACHER REQUEST	6. TIME RANGE	7. AVG. LENGTH
Ayala	20	2	3	4	?	10- 30	20
Best	80	35	35	20	10	15-120	30
Bridges	34	30	30	30	15	10- 45	25
Cheek	250-300	26	26	26	8	10-180	20-30
Clayton	200-250	20	20	-	6	10- 60	20-30
Davis	20-30	3	3	2	10	5- 20	10
Cottrell	576	.5	.75	.25	.5	30- 90	45
Garcia	15	15	5	-	5	30- 90	60
Harris	30	20	12	6	10	15- 90	30
Johns	21	5	2	1	1	15- 60	20
Karol	50	18	18	7	0	5- 20	10
Kupferle	150-200	30	30	5	10	30- 60	45
Longeway	85	20	15	20	25	5- 55	25
MacGorman	100	30	30	25	25	20-120	30
McCreath	20- 25	4	4	6	0	10- 45	20
Munch	20	20	2	0	2	30- 90	60
Oxsheer	40	20	10	10	3	20- 55	45
Perrone	75	30	30	15	10	15-120	20-30
Roberts	180	26	20	26	10	30- 60	30
Sanders	50	10	10	10	2	45- 60	30
Sapp	100-150	20	20	10	10	10- 60	30
Sides	78	-	13	10	5	15-360	30
Stites	25- 30	7	9	9	3	20- 45	35
Wiederkehr	84	35	35	25	15	30- 60	30
AVERAGE	100.5	17.8	15.9	11.1	7.7	18.1-83.1	30.6
RANGE	15-576	.5-35	.75-35	0-30	0-25	5-360	10-60

Table 1A. First Seven Questions on Supervisor/Diagnostician Survey

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. # VISITS | How many classroom visits did you make during the 1981-82 school year? |
| 2. SCHEDULED
AHEAD | How many of the above visits were scheduled with the teacher ahead of time? |
| 3. TEACHER
CONFERENCE | How many of the visits, scheduled or unscheduled, were followed by a sit down conference with the teacher? |
| 4. PRINCIPAL
CONFERENCE | How many of the visits, scheduled or unscheduled, were followed by a sit down conference with the principal? |
| 5. TEACHER
REQUEST | How many of the visits were requested by the teacher? |
| 6. TIME RANGE | What was the range of time for your classroom visitation? |
| 7. AVERAGE
LENGTH | What was the average length of your visits? |
-

Table 2. Documentation of Visits: response by Supervisor/Diagnosticians to the question "How did you document your visits...follow-up conferences?"

- Notes on calendar/appointment book/notebook (13)
- Written, dated observations (7)
- Comments on IEP
- New teacher only - handwritten copy
- Teacher documentation notebook
Report to Teacher
- Formal document evaluation (5)/observation/visitation (2)
- By letter

Table 3. Objectives or Classroom Visits: Frequency (F) and Importance (M); by Supervisor/Diagnostician

CATEGORY	SUPERVISOR/DIAGNOSTICIAN																							
	AYALA	BEET	BRIDGES	CHEEK	CLAYTON	DAVIS	COTTRELL	CARCIA	HARRIS	JOHNS	KAROL	KUPFERLE	LONGWAY	MACGORMAN	MCCRATH	MUNCH	OXSHEER	PERONE	ROBERTS	SANDERS	SAPP	SIDES	STILES	WIEDERKEHR
1) Observe/evaluate instruction and class management		3F 1M	2F						1F 2F 2M	1F 3M	1F 2F 1M 3M	2F 2M	1F 3M		1F 2F 2M 3M	3F 3M	2F	1F 3F 1M	1F 2F 3F 1M 2M 3M		3F 2M	2F 3M	1F 2M	
2) Observe/evaluate specific students	1F 1M 2M			1F 1M		1F 3F 1M 3M	1F 2F 1M 2M		2F				2M		3F 1M	1F 1M	1F 1M	2F 2M		2F		1F 3F 1M 2M	2F 1M	
3) Advise teacher re instruction/class management/curriculum		3M	1F 1M		1F 2F 1M 2M 3M		1F 3F 1M 3M			3F 1M 2M	3F 2M	1F 1M	2F 3F 1M 2M	1F 3F 1M 2M		2F 2M	2M	3M		1M 2M 3M	1F 1M		3F 3M	1M
4) Provide information/assistance with: forms, policy, criteria, test interpretation, student data, placement	2F 3M	1F 2F		2F 2M		2F 2M														1F				2F 3F 2M
5) Supervise use of IEP		2M	2M					1M																
6) Prepare for ARD				3F 3M	3F							3F 3M												
7) Support teacher/boost moral/develop good relationship						2F 3M	3F 3M							2F 3M							2F 3M			
8) Develop good relations with regular education/respond to principal, regular teacher request		3F 3M														3F 3M			3F					1F 3M

Table 4. Summary of Supervisor/Diagnostician Objectives of Classroom Visits by Importance and Frequency

OBJECTIVES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE (most important to least important)

3. Advise teacher re instruction/class management/curriculum.
1. Observe/evaluate instruction and class management.
2. Observe/evaluate specific students.
4. Provide information/assistance with: forms, policy, criteria, test interpretation, student data, placement.
7. Support teacher/boost moral/develop good relationship.
5. Supervise use of IEP.
6. Prepare for ARD.
8. Develop good relations with regular education/respond to principal, regular teacher requests.

OBJECTIVES IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

1. Observe/evaluate instruction and class management.
2. Observe/evaluate specific students.
3. Advise teacher re instruction/class management/curriculum.
4. Provide information/assistance with: forms, policy, criteria, test interpretation, student data, placement.
7. Support teacher/boost moral/develop good relationship.
6. Prepare for ARD.
8. Develop good relations with regular education/respond to principal, regular teacher requests.
5. Supervise use of IEP.